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way to our boat, which we reached at 4 P.M. After dinner, at 5.30, we took our dingy, and pulled over to the tea-plantations under the lofty Sugar-cone mountain, on the southern side of the Shin-Hing-Huss. Near to these plantations we visited a quarry 800 feet deep, from which they dig the black stone which the Chinese use for inkstands, or rather what we should call palettes: the Chinese using solid Indian ink, rub it, when wanted, on these peculiar tablets. The stone is valuable, but the quarry was not being worked, the mandarins having stopped the proprietors. "But," said the inhabitants, "if you Taiwans (or Great Nation) will order the mandarins, they will be forced to allow us to work this mine"—showing that the people of China have a little notion of our power. When we returned on board, we slipped our moorings, and went to Lo-un-Chun, a place nearer the Teng-Foo mountains, and situate at the bend of the river near Kwangli.

*Saturday, 16th March.*—Breakfasted at 7 A.M. Started soon after to try to reach the top of the Teng-Foo Mountain. Very misty. Went up to the Monastery by 9.40 A.M. Here we got some bamboo-poles, and continued the ascent. By mid-day we reached a place beyond which our guide had never been. No scenery but dense white clouds. We, however, pushed up the steep rocks, and at length got to a peak of about 2000 feet elevation. What was our disappointment to find that this was not the highest peak; to reach which we should have to descend, and re-ascend on the other side of a tremendous chasm. This was impossible, and with many regrets we returned to the Monastery, leaving the ascent of the real highest peak for travellers with more time. As our leave would be up on the following Monday, we were obliged to make all sail back to Canton. We returned to our boat, after seeing two beautiful falls, and a bell weighing 2000 catties. At 7 in the evening we got back, and set sail for Poo-ne-Shui, but at 9 o'clock stopped at Wang-Sha on account of the rain.

*Sunday, 17th March.*—7.30 passed Tsing-kee; 12 arrived at Synam; 9 P.M. arrived at Fatshan, and anchored.

*Monday, 18th March.*—Seeing Fatshan all the morning. Arrived in Canton at 6 P.M.

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### 9.—*British Columbia, and a proposed Emigrant Route from Pembina to Yale.* By WM. KELLY, Esq., F.R.G.S.

THE geographical position of British Columbia, with respect to the mother-country and other European fountains of emigration, places it at a serious disadvantage in competing for population with the great American and Australian regions, at least under the present arrangements for transport. In fact, the only two recognised routes of approach to it are those by the Isthmus of Panama and round Cape Horn; the former of which, whether direct from Southampton or by way of New York, is attended with so considerable an outlay, that it is utterly out of the reach of the class of emigrants alone fit for encountering the primary difficulties of pioneer colonization; and although the latter may perhaps offer some trifling advantages on the score of economy, the extreme length, danger, and suffering inseparable from a voyage round Cape Horn to the westward, must operate as a complete bar to family emigration.

This state of things is the more to be deplored from the fact—which I can conscientiously aver from two years and six months' residence in British Columbia—that there is no other British possession more suitable or congenial to the Celtic or Anglo-Saxon race as regards climate, nor one which presents more genuine or substantial allurements to settlers in the extent and variety

of its internal resources. To which may be added the probability of a steam communication between Australia and Fraser River—a consummation that hinges upon the formation of a highway from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean; Sydney being absolutely 900 miles nearer to New Westminster than to Panama, by which latter route it is at present contemplated to establish a mail route for the purpose of expedition.

The mean temperature of British Columbia approximates as nearly as may be to that of the British Isles. In the immediate valley of Fraser River, up to its junction with Thompson River, where it may be said to run through a grand mountain defile for over 120 miles, the winter season is perhaps somewhat colder and more protracted than ours save in the north of Scotland; but after emerging from the foothills of the Cascade Ranges into the vast open rolling territory lying between them and the Rocky Mountains, the seasons do not exceed the British average.

At Fort George, which approximates to the 54th parallel of latitude, all sorts of cereals and garden vegetables arrive at perfect maturity, and cattle, for the most part, can be safely wintered out; for even in seasons when the ground is covered with a tolerably deep coat of snow, there is a tall, coarse, succulent bunch-grass, which penetrates the surface, affording them abundant nourishment. Farther north, as we approach the Russian frontier, the natural variation of temperature, of course, is experienced; but to the southward, the newly-discovered valley of the Semilkameen, from the peculiar position and configuration of the country, enjoys a mild and genial atmosphere, altogether unusual in similar parallels of latitude. Throughout the colony, neither the heat of summer nor the cold of winter at all approaches the extremes of Canada or the more northern states of the Union. In ordinary seasons mining operations only suffer a brief interruption in the north—none at all in the valley of the Semilkameen. And if we are to measure the salubrity of the climate by the bills of mortality, it must rank wonderfully high indeed; for, with the exception of *scurvy*—inevitable at the outset from the dearth of vegetables and fresh provisions,—I was perfectly astonished at the general exemption from endemic disease, particularly considering the extreme hardships and predisposing causes attending a miner's life in a new country. In truth, a large proportion of the deaths that came under my cognisance were such as in an older country would challenge the inquiry of the coroner.

The salmon-fishery affords an immense scope for capital and enterprise. It is quite impossible to imagine the extent and density of the shoals of this fish in their full season. I have often stood on a rock and dipped out the fish with a large rude landing-net as quick as I could submerge it, and have seen Indians at the same time literally shovelling them ashore with canoe-paddles. Salt for curing them is obtainable in any quantity from the great saline springs in Vancouver Island; and as all the inhabitants of the Pacific islands, whether in the South Sea or Northern Archipelago, are excessively partial to cured fish, there could be no difficulty whatever in finding a ready and remunerative market for all that could be put up.

Next I would call attention to the endless supply of timber of the finest description and greatest variety—pine, fir, spruce, hemlock, cedar, oak, ash, maple, willow, alder, cotton-wood, &c. But the timber valuable as an article of export is the pine, which, from its prodigious size and uncommon straightness, is peculiarly suitable for masts and spars, a grand specimen of which may be seen in Kew Gardens. There is no doubt that vessels taking out merchandise could make splendid return-freights by loading with spar logs, which command an extraordinary price and ready sale in the home markets. These logs can be had of any dimensions. On the immediate banks of the Fraser, for at least 50 miles from its mouth, hundreds upon hundreds of most magnificent trees, cut down to clear the site of New Westminster, were burnt upon the ground.

Although there is scope enough of territory in British Columbia suitable for pastoral and agricultural purposes to satisfy the requirements of an independent state, I conceive that the colony is to be chiefly estimated for its unbounded mineral wealth. Its gold is well known.

Silver, too, has been discovered in many districts.

Cinnabar of the richest description was found in the Cariboo country by Captain Bowen, a gentleman with whom I am intimately acquainted.

Every one of the returning prospecters who came down last fall from the north and north-western districts, to make arrangements for the present season, brought specimens of one sort or another; among which I can enumerate, from inspection, pure copper, platinum, agates, cornelians, coal, limestone, marbles of the purest and most beautiful kind. Lignite, or a species of bituminous wood of the earthy variety, is quite common in those districts, and is used by the miners for fuel. It is of a brownish-black colour, nearly as light as water, very friable. It burns freely when blown, sending forth a light blaze, which may be utilised for blacksmithing purposes.

Plumbago of the purest kind has been found in many localities by Major Downie in masses of magnitude sufficiently large to supply all the markets of the world. Mineral and hot springs, too, are features of this richly endowed colony.

As to the general character of the soil in the thousands of square miles fit for settlement, it is sufficient to say, that it is undeniably excellent in all its varieties for either agriculture or pasture. The cereals, fruits, and vegetables of Britain and France can be readily produced; and stock, as I have already observed, can for the most part be wintered out without any supply of fodder. It is therefore abundantly manifest that British Columbia offers a field for emigration, now especially that the land-system has been liberalised.

Population is all that British Columbia requires to ensure its growth and unbounded prosperity; but, in order to get that, we must have some practicable avenue of approach, which, as regards time, safety, and economy, shall be within the reach of the small farmer, tradesman, and navvie. Such a one, from the nature of the country, and from the estimates of highly qualified travellers, there is no doubt could be constructed for 250,000*l.*—made, too, after such a manner as to form a sound basis or foundation for future railway operations between Pembina, on the 49th parallel, and a central point in British Columbia—say Yale, the highest point of steamboat navigation on the Fraser River. The entire distance from point to point does not exceed 1100 miles, 250 of which can be accomplished by river-steamers in the South Saskatchewan.

In the Royal Speech, Her Majesty indulged in the hope “that my new colony on the Pacific, British Columbia, may be but one step in the career of steady progress by which my dominions in North America may be ultimately peopled in an unbroken chain from the Atlantic to the Pacific by a loyal and industrious population”—a hope certain to be ultimately consummated, as well from the grand prospects growing out of eastern policy, as from the fact that the splendid country lying between the Red River settlement and the Vermilion Pass is in the wheat-growing parallel; that vast and varied mineral discoveries have recently been made in British Columbia; and that the embouchure of the Fraser furnishes one of the finest harbours in the world. At present the most direct route is *via* Portland, U.S., whence Chicago can be reached in ten days by the Grand Trunk Railway. From Chicago to St. Paul’s, a distance of 350 miles, can be accomplished in one day by rail; and thence to Pembina, about 450, in one day, when the railway is finished (at present it takes eight days). From this point it is that recent explorers suggest the formation of an emigrant trail, diverging north-westerly, to Elbow on the South Saskatchewan in an oblique direction, instead of diverging at right angles to Assiniboine. Several small parties of Canadians

and Americans travelled this trail in 1859 and 1860; one of which was under the conduct of a Mr. McQueen, a gentleman of intelligence and discrimination, whose acquaintance I had the good fortune to make. He describes the route as one easily made into a good waggon-road—much superior to the overland Oregon one. It is sparsely wooded at intervals, and abounds in feed and water all the way, affording many most eligible localities for settlement. He estimates the distance from Pembina to Elbow at 420 miles. From Elbow his party proceeded along the Saskatchewan about 150 miles, and found it perfectly navigable the entire way for good-sized steamers. They then diverged in a direct westerly course (finding the river took a great southerly sweep), and, after travelling 100 miles over grassy prairies, they struck the river again, and followed it up to Fort Bow, about 80 miles; and even here Mr. McQueen pronounces it navigable for stern-wheel steamers. From Fort Bow, as Dr. Hector says, “The ascent to the water-parting on the Vermilion Pass is scarcely perceptible, being only as 1 in 135”—an opinion fully confirmed by Mr. McQueen, who, with his party, weary and footsore, under heavy packs, reached the forks of Thompson and Fraser rivers (the heart of British Columbia) in twelve days, stopping very frequently each day to prospect for gold, and make inquiries from the various digging-parties they came across. To recapitulate, then: throwing in one day of grace for contingencies, Pembina can be reached from Portland in five days; and, admitting that the remaining 1100 can be accomplished at the same average rate that the American overland-mail contractors do their work, the entire distance from Portland, on the Atlantic, to New Westminster, on the Pacific, could be performed readily in twenty-five days. With such a line once started, Her Majesty’s expression would soon become developed, and a thoroughfare within reach of all classes of emigrants fairly established.

If Government will make moderate concessions of the public domain along the route, capitalists can readily be found who will undertake to construct a good, well-graded waggon-road, suitable for the basis of a future railway, under conditions to allow Government to re-enter possession of the grant whenever it should be required for public purposes. In a short lapse of time we would then have pony-expresses, soon followed by stage-coaches for the heavier mails. Although I am aware that at the present juncture it is not prudent to cite American precedents on any subject, I nevertheless feel confident that ascertained results, fortified by well and long-proved experience, cannot be hastily ignored. The United States Government has invariably found the granting subsidies to overland-mails was putting out the public money to fructify at the best advantage, by at one and the same time enhancing the value of the public domain in opening it up for settlement, and by improving the revenue and trade in encouraging the spread and increase of population. This, to my positive knowledge, has been remarkably demonstrated in subsidising the daily overland mail from Sacramento city, in California, to Portland, in Oregon, a distance above 700 miles over what was theretofore a perfect wilderness; and although the service has been little over one year at work, nearly all the fertile tracts along the route have been taken up, while the stages for horse-changing and refreshments have become the nucleus of townships, where land now sells by the foot. There is no doubt whatsoever that similar results would follow if a like system were adopted on the line I propose. Or if the Government undertook the scheme as a public work, I believe the necessary funds would be forthcoming, ere its completion, from the sale of public lands for farms and townships.

The Government of British Columbia, in excusable anticipation of a Pacific Railway, is constructing its highways into the interior at such easy grades that on a future day they may be available for laying down rails upon. And that such a railway will be made there seems every plausible assurance, as well from the exigencies of our newborn eastern commerce, as because the whole

range of the Rocky Mountains south of the 49th parallel does not furnish one single practicable pass, while that called the Vermilion Pass, in the direct line, is in British territory, and does not exceed 4944 feet in altitude. Dr. Hector describes it as "not presenting any difficulty whatever to the construction of a railway, connecting the fertile prairies of the Saskatchewan with the auriferous valleys of British Columbia."

I think I shall abundantly prove, by the following extracts from a letter written by a distinguished member of this Society (Captain Richards, of the surveying-ship *Hecate*, in reply to an address from the corporation of New Westminster), the excellence of that port as a point of departure:—

"Her Majesty's Surveying Ship, 'Hecate,' off New Westminster,  
October, 30th, 1860.

"... However highly you may estimate our services, it is yet to natural causes alone that the Fraser River owes its immunity from dangers and difficulties, almost always incident to Bar harbours. Effectually sheltered and protected as it is, in common with the coast of British Columbia, by the natural breakwater which the sister colony affords, your noble river is accessible at *all times of tide* to vessels of from 18 to 20 feet draught and 1000 tons.

"It is free from risk of life and property in a higher degree than any river I am acquainted with on the western side of this continent; and when a light-ship is stationed at the Sand Heads, or the entrance marked by permanent buoys, the seaman may guide his vessel through at *all times* with ease and safety."

10—*Ascent of Um Shaumur, the Highest Peak of the Sinaitic Peninsula*, 1862. By the Rev. T. J. PROUT, M.A., F.G.S., Student and late Censor, Christ Church, Oxford.\*

THE mountain Um Shaumur, the loftiest and grandest in the peninsula of Sinai, is situated about 12 miles south-south-west of Gebel Katherin, but from the rugged nature of the intervening country, a somewhat circuitous journey of 10 or 12 hours' duration<sup>1</sup> is required to reach it. The mountain rises precipitously in three peaks or base-tops, of which the western is considerably the highest (say 300 feet above the central, and 100 feet above the eastern peak). The height of the western peak above the sea has been given at 9200 feet; but I cannot vouch for the correctness of the statement; and indeed all figures in this account must be understood as approximative, as we had no means with us of taking accurate measurements. The camel-road to the mountain, from the Convent of St. Catherine, lies first of all in a south-easterly direction up the Wady Shu'eib, and along the track leading to Shurm, for about two hours; and then, turning more to the southward, winds through rather a dull valley as far as regards scenery, but possessing some interest geologically from the extensive deposits of recent sandstone and conglomerate which have been formed along its bed by the wearing away of the mountains above. About two hours more, at the ordinary rate of camel-travelling, bring us to some high ground at the upper end of this valley, from whence we obtain a fine view full in front of the cone-shaped "Jebel-el-

\* A narrative of a previous ascent of one of the minor peaks of Um Shaumur, accompanied by a sketch of the mountain, has been forwarded to the Society by the Rev. Frederick Howlett.—ED.